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AUTHOR	Brooks, Nelson
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INSTITUTION	Georgia State Coll., Atlanta. Dept. of Foreign Language.; Georgia State Dept. of Education, Atlanta.
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ABSTRACT

An overview of foreign language instruction is seen as a spectrum composed of five distinct areas. The speech includes discussion of concepts related to the curriculum, linguistics, psychology, culture, and a "Master Plan". The author comments on the importance of understanding that language instruction, as an academic pursuit, is directly related to the study of the humanities and for that reason urges that curriculum be made more relevant. To this end, he suggests a reexamination of the role of culture study in language courses. Concluding remarks focus on FLES and suggestions for improving classroom teaching methods. (RL)

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BROOKS SCANS Language Spectrum

Dr. Nelson Brooks (r.) and Alberto Rodriquez chat about FLES in Woodbury.

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By Dr. Nelson Brooks
Yale University

Addressing CMFLA in Fall

The title of my talk is "Foreign Language Instruction and Georgia." It is divided into two parts, the first called "Rainbows" and the second, "Questions." By "rainbow" I mean a spectrum, a form in which we can often present a number of things that are related to each other, but in which we wish to see differences together with sequential arrangement. The colors of the rainbow provide a good model for this kind of presentation.

The first I have called the "Curriculum Spectrum." The first sector is FLES, the second junior high school, the next senior high school, then college, then graduate school, and finally continuing education. A curriculum, as we know, is really a race course. Our student must enter this race in one of these sectors and continue through the next and the next until the course is finished or he gives up.

FLES As Beginning

Several things are at once apparent when we look at this spectrum. For one thing, when we speak of methods or materials, we need to indicate of which sector we are speaking, how long the students we refer to have been in the race, and how the methods or materials relate to those used in the preceding or the following sector. Also, FLES appears, in this arrangement, as the beginning of a serious course of study, and its relationship to what follows is at once visible. The model also shows us that we, as individual teachers, are likely to remain in a given sector while the student must move through one after the other, and the work we ask him to do should always reflect awareness of an overall plan.

The second spectrum is called "Linguistic." It has five sectors, as follows: syntactics, semantics, pragmatics, culture, and literature. Syntactics refers to what we generally just call grammar, in its broadest sense; the grammar of sounds, of forms, and of sentence patterns—the study of the signs of language as they relate to each other. In the second sector, semantics, we study the ways in which the changing forms of syntactics are able to carry meaning. A dictionary is to semantics as a grammar is to syntactics.

Person In Picture

In the third sector, pragmatics, we study language in use, which means we must have in mind not only the facts of grammar and vocabulary, but also something about the person who is using language to express his thought. Here the individual enters the language picture, and we have to take him into account as well as the system of language. The fourth sector we have named culture, remembering that there are both verbal and non-verbal areas in culture. Here we can dwell upon the significance of language in the life of the individual and in the social order to which he belongs. In the fifth sector, literature, language is raised to the level of fine art, with all the uses and refinements and esthetic experiences that are implied. Presenting these matters in the form of a spectrum reminds us of their interrelationship and of the function of language as the working material of the literary artist.

The third spectrum we call the "Psychological" or "Vygotsky Spectrum." It is the result of a careful study of the final chapter of Lev Vygotsky's book *Thought and Language* and the application of his many suggestions to our work in language instruction. This spectrum is a broader one with nine different sectors. They are these: consciousness, thought, thought in words, inner speech; then spoken monologue, spoken dialogue, talk in general, writing in general, and language in the form of literature.

When we practice language, we move about with great rapidity from one of these sectors to another. If this model helps us understand what we go through as we make use of our mother tongue, it also illustrates the task of the language teacher who must provide for his students an experience in a second language that replicates, as far as possible, the experience of one's first language. We see at once that true bilingualism involves a doubling of the spectrum, and this shows how ambitious we are in the language programs in which we are now engaged.

Sectors Of Culture

There is still another spectrum we can call the "Culture Spectrum," this time a more familiar one. It has five sectors: biological growth, personal refinement, artistic activity, patterns for living, and a total way of life. An important assignment for us at the present time is to see to what extent we can make these cultural matters a vital part of language instruction at all levels.

This is probably best done by beginning with the fourth sector, and we may pause briefly to see what lies within this culture area. We may say that there are to be found in it the constants of the human predicament. These may be identified as follows: the ego-self, the family, the conscience, the household, health, adjustment to environment, emotional attachments,

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education, individual and group relations, and belief and value. For the moment we are only passing these matters in quick review, but upon closer inspection we would soon see the potential here for a direct impact upon our language programs from the very beginning.

A fifth spectrum is called "Master Plan," and this refers not only to Georgia, but to every other state. The master plan as we think of it now is divided into nine sectors, and we can do no more at the moment than to recite quickly the titles of each of these sectors. They are as follows: concepts, structures, people, materials, institutions, professional organizations, research, control, and support and implementation. A full elaboration of this schematic plan would provide a place for each of the elements, personal, material, and other, that go to make up the total fabric of language instruction in formal education as we practice it today. One very significant value of such a plan would be that each individual teacher could see where he fits into a grand scheme of educational effort.

Five Rainbows

These then are our five rainbows: curriculum, linguistic, psychological, cultural, and master plan. They are the tools of thought that can help us conceive in a more comprehensive way the importance and the value of our work.

In the second part of this talk, we will ask a few questions and then attempt to find answers. My first question is "What is the ideal of foreign language instruction?" A second, "Can this ideal be realized in formal schooling?" Another, "Can the ground work for ideal instruction be made in formal schooling?" And further, "Is there a different ideal for modern and for classical languages?"

I believe that the ideal for FL instruction should be nothing less than bilingualism. I know quite well that this goal is very difficult of attainment. But this is hardly an argument to present against an ideal. You will remember the advice of Robert Browning: A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for? Our ideal needs

Carmen Greenway, of Macon, stops to congratulate Dr. Nelson Brooks on his speech, especially on the FLES comments.

definition, and I would define bilingualism thus: Bilingualism is the habitual use of two languages, each independent of the other, by the same individual. Now, we know that to use a language one must know what it means, and meaning takes us to culture. Therefore, really to be bilingual means to be bicultural. Though all that we are usually able to do in formal education in a foreign language may be far from true bilingualism, this is not to say that the beginnings of bilingualism cannot be established.

Bilingualism is not a state one attains suddenly, after a long period of learning. It begins the moment one starts to use two languages separately, in a way comparable to native speaker use, and it grows steadily as knowledge of the two languages increases. It is like playing two musical instruments, which of course cannot be played at the same time.

Face-to-Face, Face-to-Page

What does bilingualism mean in the study of Latin? Goals are naturally quite different in the classical languages. Language behavior, as we know, is both audio-lingual, or face to face, and visual-graphic, or face to page. In a modern language, the learner works toward both audio-lingual and visual-graphic control. In Latin he works toword a visual-graphic control. There are two books of special interest here because they relate to the cultural dimension of bilingualism. For those in the field of Latin, I would recommend George Shipway's *The Imperial Governor*. For those in a contemporary language, Nordhof and Hall's *Pitcairn Island*. These are books that both teachers and students may read and discuss in the light of their valuable insights into the area of culture.

What shall we say of the present state of affairs and the future prospects in our profession? We can believe, I think, that our profession is in good estate. But the situation is dynamic, meaning that changes are imminent and we must be sure that they are of the right kind. Here are some suggestions for better control of and improvement of our activities. For one thing, we need to recognize that students come to our classes with a variety of goals in mind as well as a variety of competencies in language learning. We should recognize that some will be more ambitious and some less and provide room in our curricula for those who are willing to work but who have different intentions in mind. For example, at the secondary level we need not only courses for those who expect to continue their formal education in college, but also for those who will not go beyond the secondary level.

Area Of Humanities

Another question is this: In the total academic picture, where does our profession belong? The answer, I think, is clear and needs to be clearly stated. We belong unequivocally to the humanities. We rely heavily on the sciences in the beginning of our work, but our task is not complete until we have taken our learners into an area that is undoubtedly humanistic. To make our position understandable both to ourselves and to others, we must first define with care what we mean by the humanities, then outline with equal care the honorable place that foreign language instruction holds in this sector of the academic spectrum.

To borrow a term from the younger generation, we need to make our teaching relevant. This we can do by providing better content in our courses at all levels of learning as well as more dynamic and imaginative programs in our daily classes. One area of rich resource for bringing variety and appealing content into our courses is culture, with all the meanings we have suggested.

Morpheme "—ness"

What is the key to more relevant teaching of culture? I would say that we can find it in the word, or rather the morpheme, "-ness." We should seek out and identify, under the rubic culture, the Frenchness of the French, the Germanness of the Germans, the Spanishness of those who speak Spanish, the Latinness of those who used to speak

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Latin. Pursuit along these lines will lead us to the unique quality that sets off one language community from another in terms of its patterns of living, its accomplishments, its beliefs and values, its solution for life's standard problems.

How To Improve

A reasonable question that often accompanies those we have listed is this: How can I as an individual teacher improve my teaching? Here are some suggestions. The first is to visit the class of a colleague who teaches your subject and have your colleague visit you. Visits are not always easy to arrange; all sorts of administrative difficulties, schedule obstacles, and protocol matters are sure to be encountered. Nevertheless, even a few visits can be of enormous help in modifying and changing and improving our way of teaching. In addition to visits, we can exchange tapes made in our own classes, amateur recordings with all kinds of faults, yet remarkably revealing as candid shots of what we and our students are doing. They will have both strengths and weaknesses and can be depended upon to help us improve.

A third plan is a description by the teacher of a successful technique that he or she has proposed and perfected in the classroom. Such a description can be brief and can include the following: where are the students on the curriculum spectrum, how old are they, how long have they studied the subject, what is the aim of the technique, what does the teacher do, what do the students do, what is the role of the blackboard or technical aids, what manifest learning results? All these, and of course many others, are ways of being critical if ourselves and of each other, but critical in a positive and constructive way.

Recommendations

Here is a short report on a briefing of college instructors at Yale University last September on the day before classes began. It may well have in it some suggestions for all of us. Professor Sammons, the Chairman of the German Department, addressed a group of beginning teachers and made these recommendations: 1. Be cheerful, 2. Stay on your feet, 3. Use the blackboard, 4. Be prepared, 5. Keep the proper pace, 6. Give fluency priority over correctness, 7. Support the text, 8. Avoid snafu in assignments.

May I bring to a close these remarks on foreign language instruction and Georgia with a reference to the statewide FLES program now in progress. As we know, the whole concept of audio-lingual owes a great deal to FLES, and the current Georgia venture in television FLES is of an importance and scope and size that is truly impressive. We should view it in the light of the spectrum I spoke of at the beginning of this talk and see it as an integral part of the long range language course.

If you are already acquainted with this program, you have every right to be proud of its quality and its progress. If you are not yet acquainted with it, you should seek information without delay and, above all, visit some of the FLES classes. You are sure to see some of the basic problems and accomplishments in language instruction in sharp relief.